

THE QUIVER

Saturday, April 30, 1870.



"The three ladies left the room."—p. 466.

TWO YEARS.

A TALE OF TO-DAY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "ESTHER WEST," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XII.—A DINNER PARTY.

ALL freedom of family intercourse had vanished among the Palmers. It was not that they feared each other's condemnation, it was simply that want of sympathy had stifled confidence, as surely

as want of air would stifle breathing lungs. Harry, indeed, did fear Patricia's condemnation in the matter of his engagement, though he was ready enough to brave it, and he had hoped that Anne would rush

off and communicate the tidings in the heat of the moment.

Mr. Palmer had not spoken of it to his daughters. He had left Harry to tell them, and he waited for them to speak. The managing clerk had ventured to comment on Miss Chapelle's sudden disappearance, and his master had abruptly silenced him by saying, "Miss Chapelle is under my care, Mr. Simmins;" and he ordered the money for her maintenance to be transmitted through the man's hands. And it had come to be known over the factory that Nelly was one day to be Mr. Harry's wife, and that before it was known to Patricia.

The first day of silence past, Anne had found her position grow more difficult with every hour. Patricia, in the same position, would have ended the difficulty by speaking out; it was Anne's morbid delicacy that kept her silent. If she could only bring Patricia and Harry together again, all would be well. He would tell her himself in their first half hour of confidential talk; but Harry and Patricia did not seem likely to come together; on the contrary, they seemed tacitly to avoid any occasion for doing so. This party seemed to Anne a perfect godsend, and she urged it on Patricia with more than usual urgency.

And Patricia, though she saw through Anne's purpose perfectly, yielded. As yet her strong self-will had not been sufficiently roused to resistance; she was rather inclined to make peace. So with very little protest she allowed Anne to write, accepting the invitation for both, at the unfashionably short notice of a single week.

Things remained in the same position till the day of the dinner arrived, and Harry accompanied his sisters to Bloomsbury Square. When they got there, Mrs. Jobson was standing the centre of a group of men, while her husband stood on the hearth-rug amid a similar one. The men evidently admired Mrs. Jobson. She was in black again, for which she seemed to have a fancy. A rich skirt of black glacé swept the floor about her feet, a small, square-cut velvet bodice encased her pretty figure, with some rich lace round the throat; a single rose was in her hair. She was coqueting as a baby might coquet—smiling and opening her innocent blue eyes to their widest.

What one could not help noticing about the men was their wonderful similarity. They might have been brothers, so much alike were they. They were not foolish-looking men; on the contrary, more than one face among them wore the impress of a certain kind of cleverness. They were manly men, if manliness consists in bone and muscle—bulk and proportion. They were all more or less inclined to be obese. In one or two the eyes "stood out with fatness;" it was a peculiar kind of animalism which made them look so much alike. And over and above this animalism, the same in kind as that which makes

one fat or resemble another at a cattle-show, Philistine was stamped on every face.

These animals fed on that fat pasturage—the British public. They were men who had never produced anything tangible. Some of them had speculated pretty largely in the article shares; but in general these had proved little other than shares of loss and misfortune. In a word, they were mere speculators.

Save the Palmers and their hostess, there were no other ladies of the party, and evidently the most distinguished of the male guests was told off to take Patricia in to dinner, while Mr. Jobson took Anne, and Harry offered his arm, as a matter of course, to Mrs. Jobson.

The dinner was, upon the whole, execrable. The salmon was red-raw, the joint done to a cinder, the ingredients of the pudding were parting company. One or two pies looked successful, but the guests were too wary to try them. Mrs. Jobson, who seemed to reserve herself for the sweets, looked on with a composure which any hostess might have envied, and which a perfect success would alone have warranted; but the face of the host gathered blackness as he and his friends made attempts to eat. "This comes," he thought, "of dining at home, when one can get a first-rate dinner at a hotel for a guinea and a half a head." As it was Mr. Jobson's practice to give his dinners at a hotel, Mrs. Jobson may be somewhat excused for her failure.

There was no attempt at general conversation; but where two gentlemen were seated together there seemed to be abundant talk about business of one kind or another. Harry chatted away with the hostess about the merest nethings, while Mr. Jobson talked across Anne to her next neighbour, never addressing her, except on the subject of eatables, during the whole evening. Patricia seemed to be having the best of it, her neighbour looking even animated in discussion.

The dessert was fine, and the guests applied themselves to peaches and pineapple with a zest unusual at the end of a feast. Mrs. Jobson ate three of the former and a large slice of the latter, and then she gave the signal to rise, and the three ladies left the room—a happy riddance, to judge from the hilarity which instantly followed their departure.

"There!" said Mrs. Jobson, with a little laugh, as they reached the drawing-room door, "I have often asked Dick to tell me what they get such fun about, but he won't. He's a regular old bear. Do you know they have a sort of bears' club? Your brother has just joined it."

"Do you mean the gentlemen down-stairs?" asked Patricia, with a look of undisguised displeasure, quite unnoticed by Mrs. Jobson as she settled herself in an easy chair.

"Yes," she replied; "and they call themselves the Social Bears; and they have fines of champagne and brandy if they do not growl before every speech, and do so;" and she held her little plump hands before her in the manner of a bear's paws when it gets on its hind legs.

Anne burst out laughing. Patricia looked at her with profound contempt.

"What folly," said the former. "I suppose Harry was ashamed to tell us;" and she glanced deprecatingly at her sister.

"Oh! your brother is such a friend of mine," said Mrs. Jobson. "He tells me everything. He told me he was engaged."

"He was in jest," said Patricia, with a look of scorn, in which there was not mingled the least gleam of credibility.

"Oh, no, I assure you; he was quite in earnest. He described her to me, and she must be lovely. But he would not tell me her name."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Patricia, carelessly.

Anne had turned away to hide her agitation, and was standing over one of the huge illustrated books which lay on the table, with trembling fingers, when, to her infinite relief, the waiter, who had been hired for the occasion, brought the ladies a cup of tea. His entrance broke off the dangerous conversation, and Anne took care that it was not resumed. Her sister wondered at her almost in silence; for her usual good sense seemed to have deserted her, and she talked feverishly on the most frivolous subjects.

At length an end was put to the mental torture which Anne was undergoing by the appearance of a solitary gentleman. It was he who had sat next to Patricia who had appeared thus early, and, before he had uttered half-a-dozen sentences, managed to convey the hint that the proceedings in the dining-room below were not to his mind.

He was a tall, well-made man of about thirty, with a rather swarthy complexion, though neither hair nor eyes were of the darkest. The eyes were brown, small, and bright as a bird's; the face was beardless; the forehead low, but broadish, and clouded with a mass of fine dark-brown hair. At first sight he was almost ugly, for the nose was thick and short, and the cheeks heavy; but you soon ceased to think so—he threw such a glow of animation into his face that it made him appear positively handsome. For his manner, it was hardly simple enough to be really good; but it aimed at simplicity, mingled with something of the grand style; but that might have been to suit his company. He was evidently a man of education, and had been in so-called good society, as he took care incidentally to prove, quoting a well-known M.P. or two as my friend Mr. So-and-so, member for such and such.

At first his talk was small and general; but before long he had engaged Patricia alone, and was enlarging on grave subjects, making himself

interesting even on commercial crises. Patricia, profoundly ignorant of men and things, thought she had never met a man so agreeable, so interesting. She marvelled to find him in what she could not help thinking, in spite of her lack of social experience, a bad set. He contrived to let her see that he felt himself above them. Then he was so frank about himself. He acknowledged that he was poor, but that his foot was already on the first step of the ladder. He had had enemies who had hitherto impeded his progress. Patricia wondered that such a man should have such bitter enemies; for he more than once alluded to their machinations as diabolical. No doubt they were bad men whom he had opposed, and who had banded themselves together to keep him down. He named more than one great engineering work of which he would have been the head, but for such opposition.

By the time he had succeeded in conveying all this to Patricia's mind (and he did it without appearance of egotism), the rest of the gentlemen had arrived on the scene, more than one of them, to Patricia's intense disgust, bearing witness to the rapid circulation of the decanters down-stairs. Anne looked anxiously at her brother as he appeared among them. He, too, had taken more than enough. His face was flushed; the veins of his hands were swollen, and his manner was slightly excited. "I wish we had never come among these people," she thought, as she looked from one to the other of the faces round her.

Presently, Patricia's companion went up to Harry, and they talked together till the carriage came, and the evening was at an end. Mr. Eden, for that was his name, handed Patricia down, and bade her good night, with just sufficient *empressement* to be pleasant. The three drove home in absolute silence—Harry asleep in the corner, the sisters each occupied with her own thoughts.

C H A P T E R X I I I .

HORACE EDEN.

"PATRICIA, it is quite true!" said Anne; and she spoke with a sudden energy, as soon as she was alone with her sister, derived from the force she had put upon herself in keeping silence so long.

"What is quite true, Anne?" inquired Patricia. "You look half frightened."

"It is quite true that Harry is engaged to be married," replied Anne.

Patricia was silent for a few minutes, then she asked with a forced calmness, which hurt poor Anne more than any passion, "When did it happen, may I ask?"

"In the summer-time, while we were away, I believe," answered Anne, looking exactly as if she had been the guilty party.

"And how long have you known this?" was

Patricia's next question, while her looks became more and more stony.

"It is some time since I knew of it," replied Anne; "but I did not know until it was all arranged."

Patricia turned away as if satisfied; but Anne rose, and, kneeling at her sister's feet, flung her arms round her waist and begged to be forgiven.

"You look at me," she cried, "as if I was a stranger. Do forgive me, darling; I was so afraid of hurting you."

"Of hurting me! I may retort that you have treated me as a stranger. Have I deserved to be treated thus? Am I such a coward that I cannot face the truth; or such a tyrant that you dare not tell it? If Harry is about to marry some person whom he is ashamed to introduce into his family, the sooner it is known the better; the sooner my father knows it the better."

Patricia had gone off on an entirely wrong tack, and Anne made haste to bring her back.

"It is not that, Patricia," she exclaimed, resuming the stately name, as she failed to thaw her sister's icy mood; "our father knew long before I did—indeed, it was he who arranged it all."

This was another stab to Patricia, but she held her peace. She did not even ask another question—the question which Anne was longing to answer. At length the latter, with another caress, ventured to speak again.

"I have not told you yet who it is," she said, in a hesitating manner.

"I do not think, after what has happened, it can matter much to me," replied Patricia, disengaging her unbending form from her sister's arms.

"Patricia," said Anne, rising to her feet, "I may have made a mistake; but in your heart you know me well enough to feel sure that I would not have withheld the confidence from you if the story I had to tell had been my own. I wished you to hear it from Harry's own lips. Do not—do not let every one of us misunderstand and hold aloof from the other in this dreadful way. It is nothing but wicked pride that is keeping you and Harry apart. I do not think he would have taken the step he has taken if you had parted friends in the summer-time; and I feel sure that your estrangement will work more mischief yet."

Anne had spoken her mind, and her mind was singularly clear when she did speak it, only she had never spoken so strongly and sternly to her sister before.

It had the desired effect. Patricia's lip quivered. She held out her hand to Anne, drew her near to her, and kissed her forehead; then she pushed her back from her a little way and said, "We must be friends always, Anne; only you must never fail me in this way again. It was a great mistake of yours. You know I am always frank with you. As for Harry, I shall never feel the same to him again."

"Don't say that, dear," rejoined Anne, "you will be good friends yet; and I hope," she went on, with some degree of hesitation, "I hope we shall like his wife. She is the—the young lady who superintended the women over at the factory. Mr. Sinning told us about her, you remember, at the last Christmas party. We saw her, too, when we were over the works that very week."

"I remember her," said Patricia, "only as a pale girl, in a black frock. I do not wonder now that Harry was ashamed of his choice; but my father—"

"She was always a favourite of his," said Anne, "and I do not see why Harry should be ashamed of her. If I remember rightly, she had a great deal of beauty, of the unobtrusive sort, and she need not be vulgar because she is poor. Our father was a poor man's son," she added, with new-found frankness, "and was once a poor man himself."

"He is fond of telling us so," said Patricia, "perhaps to keep down our pride; but I only judge others by myself, and think there can be no happiness in an unequal marriage; and I could not marry a man who was not my equal in everything."

"That is because your pride is greater than your love—at least than any love you have ever felt yet," said Anne.

"It may be," said Patricia with a sigh, and a softer expression than she had yet worn, and she thought of the stranger she had met that evening, and how it would be if he was as high-born as he was high-minded, and sought her for herself alone.

Anne told her all she knew about Nelly, and then the sisters did as they used to do when they were little girls—laid their heads on the same pillow and sealed their friendship by sleeping in each other's arms. At last Anne slept; but half through the night Patricia lay awake quite still for fear of rousing the sleeper—like a mother who holds fast her slumbering child—but mentally tossed to and fro by a multitude of vexing thoughts. The pride and self-will which ran through the whole family, with the exception of Anne, were now thoroughly stirred. She could not forgive her brother. She would not be reconciled to him. Her highest qualities seemed arrayed on the side of this resolution. She was severely just, and it was no more than justice that he should feel that he had wronged her affection. She was thoroughly loyal, and he had been disloyal—they all had been—to her. They could, none of them, be the same to her again. Oh, the bitterness of it! She would feel alone among her own nearest kindred for ever. And it was so. Patricia must have all, and be all, or nothing.

She came down the next morning a shade paler than usual, and with deeper shadows under her eyes; but she gave no other signs of what she had suffered. She did not even mention the aching pain which weighed her eyelids down. She would claim no more sympathy, and she would yield none. And so

she did not allow Harry to see by the faintest token that she knew anything whatever of his engagement; nor did days make any change in her resolve.

"Have you never mentioned my engagement to Patricia?" Harry asked Anne one day.

"I told her all I knew about it a week ago," was the answer.

"It seems strange that she has never spoken of it," he rejoined. "Are you sure that you have not made a mess of it?"

"That is really too bad," replied Anne. "I have tried to make the best of everything. I do not see that it is so strange that Patricia should not speak to you about it, as you have not spoken to her," she added.

So day after day passed, and neither Harry nor Patricia spoke of the subject that was now uppermost in their minds. All companionship between them was at an end, and theirs had been an unusually close companionship. Home was not the same to either of them now. Patricia sat dreaming away the lonely hours, almost empty of interest or occupation. As for Harry, he had lost the one pure influence that had had power over his life. Since his engagement he had been more attentive to business, and more at home when free from it; but as the alienation between Patricia and him was confirmed, he fell back upon his former associates, and these were not of the highest order. He began to be absent even more frequently than before, but Patricia took no notice. It was Anne who waited for him now, and remonstrated with him in vain.

And where was his love for Nelly? Where was the influence which she ought to have exercised over him? To say the least, it was in abeyance. That love had been the turning-point of his life, and, taken at the flood, would have led him on to ground where he would have been safe from his present temptations at least, even if he had not reached a higher level; but the tide had ebbed away, and now he was floundering among the shallows and the pools. It was not that he had ceased to love Nelly; he longed for her presence, chafed under the arbitrary separation to which he had agreed, and mentally concluded that it was a mistake which he had committed in accepting the terms his father had imposed. But Harry Palmer was not of imagination all compact. His love was not independent of time and space. Influences reached him through human eyes, and hands, and lips, and not otherwise. His passion could no more live on memory than his sturdy corporeal person could live on air. His alienation from Patricia, too, had something to do with the state of mind which led him to put thoughts of his betrothed away from him. He had lost his confidence, and he needed one sorely. Patricia was just the one he wanted; she would make light of nothing. He had an idea that Anne would laugh

at him. It was this that had led him to make his hasty and much-repentcd confidence to Mrs. Jobson.

That lady had, indeed, given him cause to repent. She lost no opportunity of teasing him about the fair unknown, and she led on her husband and his friends to tease him too. He was not quite at ease in the society of these men; but he was intensely sociable; and, having once got into the set, it was very difficult to get out of it. From their coarser vices he was free as yet; and even Mr. Jobson, who thought it sport to play the fiendish part of making others as bad as himself, refrained from tempting Harry Palmer further than to an extra glass of his favourite wine. "Palmer's a perfect baby," he would say; "let him alone."

It was, as Patricia had seen at a glance, a very bad set that Harry had fallen upon; and among them Horace Eden reigned supreme. He was the prince of good fellows among them, enjoying their coarsest jests, and keeping a cool head even when drinking with them glass for glass, but assuming a very different character when it suited him to do so. In short, he was an accomplished hypocrite. His father was a clergyman, a fact of which he had made considerable use, and he had been educated according to his choice as a civil engineer; but he had in reality forsaken his profession for a life of adventure. In the days of Queen Bess he would probably have been a pirate; and, improved by the practice of the trade, he would have made robbery romantic. This was not to be done in the days of Queen Victoria, however, and therefore he was obliged to be content to make it safe and easy by a skilful use of legal measures.

To this man Harry Palmer seemed an easy prey. When first introduced to him, he did not know to what use he might put him; but, as he was constantly using people in some way or other, he secured him as likely to be of future avail—laid him up in stock as it were. The enemies of whom he frequently spoke were the used-up people. People have a curious objection to being used up. He had used the names of some, the money of others also by the way, the affections of a few—these last being of the weaker sex. Harry Palmer was rich, or would soon be rich. He had sisters who would be rich also, and who were reported handsome. These facts were enough.

It was Mr. Eden who contrived the Jobson dinner party, and so accomplished an introduction to Harry Palmer's sisters. He also singled out Patricia by a whisper to the complaisant host. He had rendered himself so agreeable to the young man that he made sure of an invitation to his home; but as it was slow of coming he found a pretext for inviting himself, and he made the liberty he took appear only the freedom of a man accustomed to mix much in society. Out of Patricia's dreams, his figure seemed to pass

into reality without surprise. He came one wet and dreary day, and his stay was prolonged without excuse. He seemed to bring warmth and life with him. Patricia felt the thrill of it through the chill at her heart, and expanded under it. Anne, always ready to be pleased, was more than pleased—was grateful to see her sister thaw out of her frozen mood. Harry, for whom he had waited nearly a couple of hours—he had not thought it half so long, he said—pressed him to stay to dinner; but that, he said—always careful never to wear out his welcome—was impossible. He stayed, however, to the very verge of it, and saw Mr. Palmer senior, who repeated the invitation, though looking on “a friend of Harry’s” with some suspicion. Before Mr. Eden left, though he had not spoken half-a-dozen sentences in the old man’s presence, he had managed to impress him with the idea that he was a sensible fellow, by

far the least objectionable of his son’s set whom he had seen.

Mr. Eden had established his footing in the family, and soon became an intimate among those with whom intimates were few. He divided his attentions among them, the old man when present receiving the greatest share. He professed himself interested in the factory, and in business in general—a man fond of domesticity, though denied the pleasures of a home. The little rectory in Dorsetshire had greater charms for him than the brilliant scenes which he frequented. It was so difficult for an unmarried man to get a glimpse of home life in London, however free of so-called society he might be. No one noticed how fast his intimacy progressed. He ate his Christmas dinner with the Palmers, and openly gave Patricia a kiss under the mistletoe.

(To be continued.)

C O M P E N S A T I O N S.



“**H**OU art not rich, thou art not fair;
Thou canst not boast of wond’rous
gifts;
Whence comes the sunshine of thine
air?
What secret hope thy soul uplifts?
Visions of a brighter morrow
After years of anxious sorrow?”

“Bereft of pleasures, full of care,
My outward life may seem to thee;
But God has compensations rare,
And joys within He giveth me;
Sense acute to feel all beauty,
Love to smooth the path of duty.

“No artist, but with artist eye
Each sailing cloud has tints for me;

No singer, yet entranced I lie
While birds rehearse their merry glee,
Nature’s beauties are my treasure,
Art delights me but in measure.

“But foremost still I love my kind,
The men and women, children sweet;
And while such int’rests fill the mind,
Say is not sunshine very meet?
Discontent brings hours of sadness,
God eternally gives gladness.”

“Contented with thy lowly lot
Thou scarce canst tell how thou art blest;
Desiring nought thou hast not got
Far richer art thou than the best;
Sons of earth poor mirth will borrow,
Thou hast Peace despite of sorrow.”

D I V I D E D L I V E S.

IN TWO PARTS. BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF “UNDER FOOT,” ETC. ETC.

PART II.—WINNING HIS LAURELS.

NOTHING broke the calm of life for the Ellises until the death of the old man, which happened about five years after Caleb Crossland had left England. During that time letters had come regularly from him, and the inmates of the cottage had been kept well informed about him in his new life. From time to time there were glowing accounts of his success; but

to the surprise and disappointment of his village friends, there was no talk of Caleb coming back, even for a holiday visit.

Ruth’s parents never knew exactly how the young people stood towards each other. They were sorely troubled and perplexed when their daughter once said, in answer to some gentle rallying about her courtship, “I don’t think it likely that Caleb and I will ever marry, so you will not be in danger of losing me, mother. I shall be

married to you and father, Caleb to his music, and the fame he is working and living for."

That was the only time Ruth ever spoke her mind so freely on the subject. After her father's death, the letters from Berlin grew shorter and came at longer intervals; for which shortcomings, as a correspondent, the busy writer sent excuses which Ruth accepted without a word of comment or complaint; then word came that he was about to travel for a time, after which letters became more uncertain, and at last ceased.

In the meantime change and reverse of circumstances had come to Ruth Ellis and her mother. The failure of a bank had so much lessened their slender means that they were obliged to leave their cottage and take a smaller one at greatly reduced rent, which had been offered them by a distant relation of the late Mr. Ellis. The only drawback was, that it was situated some miles distant, and in the neighbourhood of a large manufacturing town—the busy hive of industry where Ruth's father had spent most of his early life. After their removal Ruth heard no more from Caleb, and thus the two lives hitherto bound together by the frail link of occasional letters drifted still further apart.

Ten years had been added to the five, fading the lovely face of Ruth Ellis, and making her mother a very old lady, confined to her easy chair, and more entirely dependent on her daughter's care. Time had not dealt very harshly with Ruth, for the quiet-looking, fair-browed woman of thirty-five was not much less attractive than the girl of twenty. The great brown eyes had the same dusky shadow in their depths, and the mouth the same sensitive sweetness. But how had it been with her through all the grey, colourless years where the days succeeded each other with such unvarying sameness, that the history of one might have been taken as a type of all that followed through the round of her life?

She trod her lowly path with such cheerfulness that none could have guessed what a cross she carried by the way; for shy Ruth had never thought of taking any one into her confidence; even her mother did not know how deeply she loved Caleb Crossland, or what pain it had cost to keep the hard resolution, which she made in the bygone time, to draw herself out from his life, and leave him free for the career which he had carved out for himself.

The light was closing in upon a cold grey autumn day, and the mother and daughter were sitting by the fire in their cottage-room, which in those days served both for parlour and kitchen. The tea-tray was ready on the table, and the brightly polished kettle was singing on the fire, while Ruth, bending over the fender, was toasting bread for her mother. She was tired; since early

morning her busy hands had been occupied with various kinds of work; but for the sake of the helpless old lady, her weariness was rarely suffered to show itself. Mrs. Ellis had been knitting, but now it lay idly on her knee, and she was sitting with her head back, thinking and watching her daughter.

"Well, Ruth," she said, at length breaking a pause in their talk, "you have not told me if you made up your mind to go on Tuesday night?"

Ruth quietly prepared to butter her toast as she answered, "I don't know, mother; I have not quite decided, but I think I shall give up the idea. I should not like you to be left here alone for a whole evening."

The old lady looked at the speaker with loving wistfulness.

"You said yesterday how much you would like to go, my dear; and it's only natural, for you were always fond of music"—adding, with a little sigh, "and you have so few pleasures now."

Ruth replied, hastily, "Never mind me, mother; I can live on without them. Don't get talking in that strain; it will not be good either for you or me."

"But I do want you to go on Tuesday, Ruth," persisted Mrs. Ellis, anxiously. "It can be managed very well: you can get little Sarah West to come and sit with me while you are gone. Mrs. Hawkins has promised to bring you back in their cab, and you will have enjoyed a treat. Make up your mind to go, my dear," continued the old lady, fondly solicitous for her daughter to secure the rare chance of enjoyment which had fallen in her way.

For an instant Ruth's eyes brightened, and the smile of other days came back.

"Very well, mother; as you wish it, I will go—that is, if Sarah West can come. It was very kind of cousin Hawkins to send me the invitation."

The mother was satisfied, and drank her tea with greater relish than usual; but she was in a talkative mood that evening. By some process of association, the mention of music had brought back to her mind the organist, Caleb Crossland; and she could not resist the impulse to speak out the thought as it came, though the subject was one rarely ventured upon between her and her daughter.

"My dear, I have been thinking about Caleb. It is so strange that we never heard anything from him all these years. I wonder if he is dead."

Ruth's tea-cup came down upon her saucer with a sudden clash, that sacrificed the greater part of its contents. She said, brokenly, "Mother, what makes you speak of *him* to-night?"

"I cannot tell, my dear; but I suppose it was talking about this music affair that brought him in my head."

But no answer came from Ruth's quivering lips; and the old lady knew, then, how deeply she was pained.

Poor Ruth! the mention of Caleb Crossland's name was like a touch upon a bare nerve. She had got used to her clouded life, and could bear it very well, so long as she was suffered to go on her own way with closed lips—she could grieve and endure, but she could not talk about the trouble even to her mother.

* * * * *

The largest public hall that the town could boast had been appropriated for the grand musical gathering which was to introduce, for the first time to a provincial audience, a new oratorio, said to be one of the greatest musical successes of the day. Another attraction was, that the composer would be conductor on the occasion.

Ruth Ellis spent part of the afternoon at the house of the cousin to whose kindness she owed the anticipated treat. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins, their three daughters, and several young lady friends, all showily dressed. Looks of pitying comment had passed among the ladies concerning Ruth's unpretending grey dress; but Mrs. Hawkins had good-naturedly thrown a black lace shawl over her shoulders, and the eldest Miss Hawkins had followed suit by placing some flowers in her hair, which was rich and ample enough to need no adornment but its own silky coils.

It was a strange scene of excitement for Ruth's unaccustomed eyes—the blaze of light, and the brilliant crowd so closely packed within the vast hall; the gay dresses of the ladies making bright patches of colour here and there, like beds of many-tinted exotic flowers. Ruth held her breath, and gazed half timidly at the sea of faces, all apparently animated by one common expression of eager anticipation.

At length the impatience of the audience reached the usual limit, and found for itself the usual energetic expression. Then the orchestra rapidly filled with the crowd of musicians and singers who were to take part in the programme of the evening; and at last, when expectation was at its height, the composer walked quietly up the steps of the platform, amidst a burst of applause that nearly bewildered poor Ruth. He stood an instant before he took his place, gracefully bowing his acknowledgment of the reception—a tall man, with grave eyes and a pale, intellectual face, that stood out vividly from all the rest.

Ruth Ellis looked on as if it was a vision given back from the dead, then suddenly stooped forward, grasping the edge of the seat to keep down the cry that rose to her lips.

Caleb Crossland! Yes; it was he. The thrill of recognition had gone to her heart. Then came

the reaction. It was Caleb in the hour of his triumph, and standing far removed from her on the proud height which he had made it the business of his life to climb.

Why had she come from her little shaded by-path of life with that touching history of hoarded love and sorrow, which made her out of place in such gay scenes? Why was she there? It would only re-open the old wound, and break up the contentment of the present by making the division between them more complete; for this was not her Caleb Crossland. The courted favourite of the rich and great, he belonged to fame and the world to whom he had given the fruits of his genius—not to her. She sat through that memorable evening in a sort of stony stupor, like one whose senses were bound by some strange spell. All the surroundings seemed merged into one face and figure, beyond which she saw nothing. The music of the oratorio, upon which so many ears were hanging with delight, fell unheeded upon hers, and the frequent bursts of applause seemed to increase her feeling of helpless bewilderment. At the end, the approbation of the audience rose to enthusiasm—the composer retired amid a shower of cheers, only to be recalled again upon the scene of his triumph.

Mrs. Hawkins's party had just quitted the seats which they had occupied in one of the front ranks, when some movement of the crowd separated Ruth from her friends, and drifted her nearer the platform, just as Caleb Crossland made his reappearance. His glance seemed attracted for an instant by some of the gaily-dressed groups of ladies in his immediate vicinity; and by force of its contrast to the rest, the figure in grey drew his notice. At the same moment Ruth lifted up her shy eyes, and their looks met. It was only a flash. Those nearest the gentleman would have seen a change in his face, which was no longer pale, but flushed with excitement. Ruth herself was not sure that she had been recognised, not until some minutes afterwards, when she found herself in one of the passages struggling to get back to Mrs. Hawkins. It was then that she felt a hand upon her arm, and a voice that thrilled her said, hurriedly, "Ruth Ellis."

It was the composer, so effectually disguised by his great coat and muffler, that the people near did not recognise him as the hero of the evening.

"Mr. Crossland!" That was all she could say.

His mouth gave a curious twist as she uttered the name, and his grasp of her arm tightened until it hurt her.

He spoke again. "Quick—you will have friends waiting, and I must not detain you now; but let me write down your address, and answer me one question—Is your name still Ruth Ellis?"



(Drawn by S. L. FILDERS.)

"Is your name still Ruth Ellis?"—p. 472.

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"Yes, of course," she said simply, wondering at the unnecessary query.

He murmured something that she did not hear, then added, in a tone which brought vividly back the organist lover of the old days, and made it seem only yesterday since they had parted, "We meet to-morrow, Ruth; until then, everything must wait. Now let me see you safely out of this crowd. But stay; you have not given me your address."

He tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, and hastily wrote with pencil the direction which she gave so falteringly.

* * * * *

That strange encounter in the music-hall materially altered Caleb Crossland's plans. He had arranged to leave the town on the following day, but that vision from the past turned the current of his life. Determined not to let Ruth drift out of sight again, he lost no time in seeking her at the address she had given, steadily refusing all the invitations that were crowded upon him when his prolonged stay in town became known.

It was a trying meeting for both. Ruth told him simply the particulars of her father's death and their removal from the old cottage. His own quick intuition supplied what she left unsaid; for the first sight of the new home in which he found her had given the key to their altered circumstances, and shadowed out to him something of what her life had been since they parted. Then came silence between them, during which he sat and studied the sweet faded face line by line. He was struggling with the consciousness of how much remained to be explained on his own side. At last he said, "Ruth, I want you to tell me why you called me Mr. Crossland last night, instead of Caleb."

"Because I had not the right," was her low-spoken answer. "Our lives were divided, and you did not belong to me. You seemed like a stranger, instead of the Caleb Crossland I had known."

"Oh, Ruth! I was not prepared for this, to find that you could so completely forget the past."

These words from him opened the overcharged wells of feeling in the deep heart. Her brown eyes kindled and her cheek flushed. He had never seen gentle Ruth Ellis roused till then.

"I forgot the past! Would that I could have done so, instead of living on it as I did, while you were learning to live your life without me."

He covered his face with his hands, as though he felt the justice of her reproaches. "You are alluding to the irregularity of my letters," he put in humbly. "There I own I was to blame. I let travelling and other things interfere with our correspondence; then, when I resumed writing, it must have been when you had left your home, for the letters I wrote you travelled back to me

months afterwards, and I did not know what to think."

Ruth replied: "You cannot find fault with anything in the present. It was your own free choice that divided us. I will not blame you, perhaps it was for the best. But why bring this back now? It can do no good to either of us. I have learned to be content with my lot."

"Ruth—Ruth, you do not know what you are saying. Have you forgotten that I went away with your consent? At that time a word from you might have kept me from going."

"But I would not have spoken it," she said proudly—"not even to save my heart from breaking. I made up my mind that I would not be a fetter on your advancement, so I let you go."

"Ah, I understand all now. It was that sentence in my uncle's letter which I let you read. Oh, Ruth! why were you not frank with me?"

He bent over her, trying to take the hand which she still held back from him. There was something touching in his humiliation as he went on, "Ruth, you are avenged, though you do not know it, for the time of my greatest triumph is also that of my sorest need—the time when I most need a woman's love and care to keep my heart right and my feet from stumbling on the dizzy height. I have won the fame I strove for, but it is not enough. I want something more to make up my life. I found it all out last winter when I was laid up with illness at a foreign hotel, and I realised how bare and dreary my years would be in the future. My heart wants you, Ruth. Will you accept the only atonement I can make for my slight to you, and for the youthful bloom you have wasted in those days of waiting? Ruth, have you spared me enough love from the past to be happy as my wife?"

So he pleaded, while she continued to shrink from him, though her heart was throbbing wildly to his words.

"Caleb, it is better as it is. We are very poor, and I am no fit wife for you now."

But this was met and overruled by a lover's force of reasoning. When he had paid his respects to the old lady, and won her, as an advocate, to his cause, he had little doubt about the result. The end may be guessed. Ruth urged that he should wait one year as a trial of his faith, and, after some demur, he consented. At the expiration of that time they were married, to the great surprise of Mrs. Hawkins and her daughters, and the unspeakable joy of Ruth's old mother, who told her daughter, with many tears, that she had no longer a wish to gratify on this side the grave. It is certain that the great composer found his gentle wife no hindrance to his career, brilliant as it was. And it is also on record that the lovers were very happy in that late union of their "divided lives."

THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

BY THE REV. DANIEL MOORE, M.A., HONORARY CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN, VICAR OF HOLY TRINITY, PADDINGTON, AND FORMERLY HULSEAN LECTURER.

BHERE is a distressing uniformity about our nature, especially on its dark and bad side. The sins and passions and follies of men are pretty much the same in every age; differing in form perhaps, and modified somewhat by changing circumstances, but the same in their own essential nature, and springing from the same root. We are but the poor copyists of the evil of a foregone generation; and, among those who shall come after, will be found men traversing the same unvarying cycle of falsehood, and guilt, and shame, as that which brought Balaam the son of Beor to a wretched and dishonoured end.

The character of Balaam is a deep and instructive study. His whole life may be considered as a commentary on that text, "Take heed lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." For as we read the narrative, we can almost see the petrifying process going on—the resolved keeping down of each rising conviction—the determined struggle against all better influences—the double and deceived heart taking pleasure in its own self-impostures—talking itself into a belief that wrong is not wrong, and inviting that final departure of the Spirit which gives a man over to a reprobate mind.

Let us consider first, *some circumstances in the history of Balaam*. Many conjectures have been raised as to who or what he was. Was he a true prophet of the Lord, or was he merely one of those diviners or magicians who were commonly consulted in the East, on account of their supposed power of foretelling future events? His residence at Pethor, on the banks of the Euphrates, and his having recourse to divinations and enchantments, would favour the notion of his being a professional magician; whilst the application of the name "prophet" to him by St. Peter, as well as the nature and extent of his religious knowledge, as displayed in his conversations, are more in accordance with the notion of his having been in the service of the true God. There seems to be no reason, however, why, at different times, he should not have been both; that is, a commissioned prophet of the Lord first, and afterwards, for covetous or ambitious ends, falling away to the lying practice of enchantments.

Be this as it may, his reputation in the East was considerable; and when, on the arrival of the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, at the close of their wilderness wanderings, Balak, the

prince of that country, was in fear for the safety of his kingdom, to none could he turn so hopefully as to Balaam, to rid him, by certain forms of magical incantation, of the presence of this dreaded foe. This practice of solemnly devoting an enemy to destruction before the commencement of a war, is of ancient use, and seems to have prevailed over a great part of the world. We find it continued up to the time of the Romans, who had a special religious service for the occasion, and a public officer was appointed, to whom it belonged to pronounce the maledictions of the gods upon the foe. Messengers, therefore, were sent to Balaam, under the persuasion that in his cursings there would be a peculiar efficacy; and the largest gratuities were offered to secure the benefit of his services. Tempting, however, as the offer was, we find that he had too much of the religious element left in his character at that time, and perhaps too much knowledge of the Divine purposes with regard to the Jewish nation, to dare to enter upon such a service, without having previously obtained permission from God himself. The messengers are detained therefore, while he seeks direction from above. The answer returned of God is peremptory, and not to be mistaken. "Thou shalt not go with the men; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." On this, the messengers are sent away. The service and its rewards are both declined. Still, even here we see the beginning of a tortuous policy on the part of this bad man. He does not deliver to the messengers the whole of the Divine answer as it had been delivered to him. "The Lord refuseth to let me go with you," he tells them, entirely keeping back the fact that, by a foregone determination of the Most High, the people were blessed already. This would probably have foreclosed all further advances on the part of Balak—the result which he was secretly hoping for, and which, as we see, actually took place.

Hence a second embassy was resolved upon, and this time with more success. The messengers had doubtless discovered Balaam's peculiar weaknesses; his avarice, his ambition, and his pride, all seen plainly enough in his hesitating refusals, and his evident wish that he might be allowed to make better terms with the king. On these indications of character, therefore, they resolved to work. More honourable princes wait upon him; larger bounties are in their hands; dignities exceeding his heart's largest desires, he is assured, only wait for his compliance with the king's request. His

first reception of this deputation, however, is not without its promise of his coming to a better mind. For he seems to rise to the moral dignity of the prophet. He affects to look upon the messengers and their gifts with a righteous and indignant scorn. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do less or more." But the poison is really working, while the words are on his lips. Like Eve in the garden, he allows himself to *reason* upon the command, to revise and reconsider the question whether it is a command or no, and all this too, while he is in the full sight and glitter of the temptation. And the glare is too strong for him. He cannot let that gold go out of his sight without one more effort to become its possessor. So the messengers are desired to tarry while he inquires what God will say to him more; in other words, to tarry while he is trying whether he can extort a permission from the Almighty to do that which he has been already told plainly he must *not* do. He gains this permission. If the men call upon him, he may go. But he is too eager after his gains to wait for the men calling. He will be up early in the morning, ready to run greedily after the wages of unrighteousness. The anger of God is greatly kindled; but there is a merciful step yet to be interposed between the purpose of sin and its consummation. The faithful beast on which he had ridden for many years refuses to go on with him. It is not the refusal of obstinacy or weariness, but of the effect of some awful and mysterious barrier, forbidding the creature's further progress. The prophet smites and smites again; but all is in vain; the ass falls to the ground before the revealed presence of the angel of God: and, as he falls, is endued with human speech to "rebuke the madness of the prophet."

A word or two here on this singular fact of the ass speaking. Many interpretations have been given of it—some to divest it of its miraculous character, others, particularly by modern German critics, intended to rob it of its true history altogether, by supposing that Balaam only saw a vision. St. Peter, however, refers to the circumstance as a literal fact; and, therefore we can accept it as nothing else. And if a fact, it was a miraculous fact. Why should it not be so regarded as well as any other miracle we read of in Scripture? He who made man's mouth and gave to him the power of speech, can be under no restraint to cause the organs of a dumb brute to articulate. Neither is this very fact of a beast speaking altogether without its parallel in heathen writings. Homer frequently puts language into the mouths of his horses; and in one remarkable passage supposes a horse to have been divinely endued with speech, for the very purpose of foretelling his master's

speedy death. Lord Derby has thus rendered the passage:—

"To whom in answer from beneath the yoke
Xanthus, the noble horse with glancing feet,
• • • • •
By Juno, white-armed Queen, with speech endued:
Yes, great Achilles, we this day again
Will bear thee safely: but thy day of death
Is nigh at hand."

And the noble beast never spoke again. Homer tells us—

"He said: his farther speech the Furies stay'd."

Of course, the object of such references is not to put Homer's fables on the same footing as the Scripture facts, but only to show how widely the belief in those facts prevailed among the nations of antiquity, so that poets were glad to make them the groundwork of their own mythological fancies. The reference shows that it was no way contrary to the most ancient Gentile beliefs, that the heavenly powers, for their own purposes, should endue the lower animals with the faculty of giving forth human utterance.

The dumb ass, however, has delivered his message; and now Balaam's own eyes are opened to see the cause of this mysterious obstruction. The miracle he has just witnessed, is neither more nor less than the angel of God, come to declare angrily, that, despite a judicially granted permission, the way of Balaam is perverse before him, and thus to afford the prophet a last chance of retracing his steps. I take this to be the final crisis in Balaam's moral history—the culminating point of the Divine forbearance. All, after this, is rapidly downward; he is urged forward with all the self-implied velocity of a body on an inclined plane, finding neither check nor rest till he sinks into the abysmal depths of perdition and despair. He returns to his own country—hated by Balak, disappointed of his reward, ruined in his reputation, given up and forsaken of God. "And Balaam rose up, and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way."

The only other circumstance necessary to a thorough appreciation of the wickedness of Balaam, is the diabolical plot laid by him for ensnaring the souls of the Israelites by means of the Midianitish women. The particulars of this execrable scheme are not given in the narrative. They seem purposely shaded over by the awful reserves of Scripture, as if the Holy Spirit would not contaminate the springs of human thought by the details of wickedness so deeply wicked, so cruelly refined, so fiendishly revengeful. All we are told, therefore, and that by incidental mention only, is, that in that act of widespread licentiousness into which the children of Israel were betrayed by the Moabitish women, the chief instigator and contriver of the plot was this crafty and disappointed prophet. For Moses, when bringing these wretched women

forth to receive their deserved sentence, exclaims, "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor." Silent as Scripture is upon the manner in which Balaam accomplished this wicked project, the feelings and motives which impelled him to it are not difficult to conjecture. For the preferments and favour of Balak he had parted with everything—his prospects in life, his tranquillity of conscience, his hopes of heaven—and yet he had failed of his poor reward after all. The recovery of his peace of mind he knew to be impossible. He had the sentence within himself of a lost character and a lost hope. He must live for this world now. Could he, by one desperate effort, yet become possessed of the proffered rewards of Balak? He might. He offers to draw into grievous sin the very people whom his lips had blessed. He will spread a snare which shall bring down upon them the fierce anger of God. The infamous scheme succeeds. The Israelites fall. The wrath of Heaven comes down, and the King of Moab is eased of his adversaries by seeing four-and-twenty thousand of their ranks laid low by a consuming plague. The retribution, in the case of this wretched man, was not slow to follow. For when a little while afterwards, the Jewish leader was fulfilling the Lord's revenge on the Midianites—among the heaps of slain was found the body of Balaam the son of Peor, the prophet of unrighteousness.

Before passing to some practical reflections on the subject of this paper, we should be glad to find room for noticing some of the prophetic utterances of this infamous man.

Most galling to him must it have been to be obliged to be the proclaimer of such sublime benedictions. But his words were no more in his power than were the words of the poor beast which had just before rebuked him. He spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The Lord put the words into Balaam's mouth, we are told: he had no choice but to utter them.

Let us glance at the general purport of them.

1. There is conveyed to Israel an assurance of the Divine favour and protection, as against all that their enemies can do. "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" This was a promise that Moab might curse, and Midian defy, but that all their efforts should avail nothing against the Israel of God. "Curse ye me the people," Balak had said, but a greater than Balak had said, "Thou shalt not curse them." And for many ages afterwards that voice was felt to be the true protection of the nation under all the assaults of their adversaries. In all their subsequent wars with the numerous border tribes, the words of Balaam

would come back to them: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." He who could turn aside the curses of the king, and balk the desires of the soothsayer, would never fail, and so long as they were true to themselves never did fail in that promise: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee will I condemn."

2. Then there was the prediction that Israel should continue separate from the other nations of the earth. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Never was prophecy more extraordinary in itself: and yet never did prophecy receive more complete fulfilment. Living in the midst of three continents, they had no intercourse with the nations by whom they were surrounded: separated from the world by their laws, their religion, their customs, their very mould and type of countenance, they continued to dwell apart; inhabitants of every clime, but with a home in none.

3. Then there was the prediction of the great increase of the nation. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" The prediction was fulfilled in the temporal Israel, and shall have a yet more complete accomplishment in the multitudinous seed of the true Israel of God. Temporally, the promise had its greatest fulfilment in the time of Solomon, and in the years that succeeded; but how much more striking shall the accomplishment be, when a great number which no man can number, gathered out of all kindreds, and nations, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne. Then, of the "washed, the sanctified, the justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," it shall be said, "Who can number the dust of Jacob?"

4. But passing over the other prophecies of this wicked man, consider the remarkable one contained in these words:—"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." The direct reference we may suppose to be to David: the more remote and enlarged application of the words is to David's Lord. For he was the Star out of Jacob. He was the Star in the East whom the wise men came to worship. He was the Day-star who is to arise in his people's hearts. He it is who in the Revelation is pleased to say of himself, "I am the bright and morning Star." And who but Christ is the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel—that should smite all the corners of Moab—that should rule in the midst of

his enemies—that should have all power given to him in heaven and in earth; and concerning whom it should be said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;" "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written.

King of kings, and Lord of lords;" "He shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth?"

On some of the practical lessons of this remarkable history, we must take an opportunity of speaking in another paper.

LITTLE DOXIE.



T is a night in November. In the heavens the grey clouds are drifting across the sky, blown onwards by angry gusts of wind. The stars are all hidden, and even when the clouds are blown away from the silver-circled moon, a mist veils her face, and she shines upon the world as through tears.

And one house that she shines on is darkened; and in mamma's room mamma is asleep, the children say. And they do not know of the tears that are shed because mamma sleeps.

It is unwelcome bed-time in the nursery. The blue-eyed possessor of a bassinet is rocked and hushed off to sleep; the child that was "baby" last year is lifted with respect to its crib. One illogical little girl resents being put to bed, on the ground that "her is too, too tired." Another, with undefined dislike goes off to sleep, clasping dolly to her tear-stained face.

And still on the chair in the window stands little Doxie. Close against the glass the little child's face is pressed, the pretty babyish lips parted, the large blue eyes steadily returning the gaze of the moon. That moon was such an old friend to little Doxie!

"I see the moon, and the moon sees me,
I'll ask the moon to have a cup of tea."

That was little Doxie's very first rhyme. And very much indeed would she have liked the pretty silver moon to have stepped out of its place in the sky, and come and sat down beside her on the nursery floor; but as yet this had not happened.

"Now, Doxie, say good night to the moon, and come to bed like a good girl."

"Here; I want you," returned Doxie, never averting her gaze from her out-of-doors friend.

"Here I am, Miss Doxie. What do you want?"

"Is she cold?" whispered Doxie.

"Who—the moon? No, very warm and comfortable," nurse said, easily fearful to excite little Doxie's compassion, and cause more lingering at the window.

"Then she's frightened," Doxie said decisively, after another look out.

"Frightened; what should she be frightened for?"

"She's crying," Doxie whispered, "and she's frightened."

"If there's one thing more than another would frighten that moon," nurse says, after a pause, "it would be your standing and staring at her. Don't you cry yourself when people stare at you? Come to bed, Miss Doxie."

So Doxie nodding assent to this speech, turned round obediently to the monotonous process of preparation for bed, standing good as gold, with thoughts wandering off the earth, and puzzled, patient eyes into which soapy water was plenteously rubbed.

"Kiss all round, Doxie," nurse says at last, and Doxie pressed her warm kisses on the face of each little sleeping sister.

"God bless dear papa and mamma, and brothers and sisters, and take care of me this night, evermore. Amen."

So prayed little Doxie the words that sleeping mother had taught her, kneeling on the nursery floor like some little spirit, her white dress terminating at bare tiny feet, and her curls falling over clasped hands, and the face hidden on nurse's knee. Then a hushed silence falls upon the room, and Doxie with the others is supposed to sleep.

But later when a certain bell rang, and nurse with quiet steps passed down the nursery stairs, little Doxie sat up and reviewed the sleeping world as seen in the different cribs—all very silent and still—not a little sister stirred. The illogical little lady had commenced a new argument in her dreams. One child supposed herself chased by a rabbit, which she would describe next day to Doxie as a "monster." Another had visions of a whole wealth of bluebells being pressed into her little hands.

The mesmerism of sleep was upon them all. And Doxie stepped out of bed, and up to the uncurtained window.

"Just once," she murmured: "only once. Perhaps she is not so frightened now."

But the clouds still held up a veil before that shining friend of little Doxie's, and it was but too evident that the moon was crying.

Doxie, who had a strange love for that shining wonder, and believed it to be alive, went down on her knees, and prayed earnestly that she might be allowed to see the moon's bright face.

She knew she had prayed to One who loves little children, and listens to their prayers, so it

was only what she expected, when, as she watched, the clouds drew their thin mists away, and passed onward, leaving the little silvery moon shining steadily down upon Doxie. She seemed to smile, or the motherless little child thought she did. Doxie laughed out aloud in her pleasure, and curled herself up for her pleasant sleep in the warm bed.

With the next day's dawn, bright sunshine poured in upon the children in the nursery.

Soon they were all sitting at the high table where nurse presided, discussing bread and milk, handed to each in her large white bowl. Before the meal was over, an elder sister appeared on the threshold.

She was a pretty, bright girl usually, but to-day her fair face was stained with tears, and her eyes looked sorrowful.

"No; I want Doxie," she said, turning to her favourite, as all the children rose at her entrance, and sprang to her with a rush; "she can finish her breakfast down-stairs with me."

So Doxie had some attention paid to her curls, and departed hand in hand with "sister."

The breakfast down-stairs presented extraordinary attractions for Doxie. Whole pots of preserve and marmalade, eggs lying upon toast, and delicious thin bread and butter. It was very like going into "Wonderland."

But soon it became apparent to Doxie that Madelon did not eat. She rested her head on little Doxie's curls, as the child sat upon her lap, and sighed wearily.

"What's the matter?" asked Doxie, a little inarticulate by reason of the good things, but with sufficient anxiety.

"I am very sad," poor Madelon told her.

"A good many people are sad," returned Doxie. her thoughts travelling back to last night.

"Oh, so many people, Doxie!—so many, many people."

"Yes," said Doxie, nodding her head, and then she saw that tears had sprung into Madelon's eyes.

"But they do not remain unhappy," Doxie said with great decision, and wound her little arms round pretty Madelon's waist.

"Don't they, my pet? How do they get happy again, Doxie?"

"Well, you know," said little Doxie.

But Madelon shook her head.

"Do I?—I don't think I do—to-day at all events."

"Oh, Madelon!"

Doxie's hands relaxed their hold, and Madelon had to see that her little sister did not fall off her lap, in her shocked surprise.

"Yes—yes, my darling, I know. You mean that we should ask God to comfort—to make us happy, Doxie."

"And he would," said Doxie—"I know he would. A person was crying yesterday—"

"A great many persons, Doxie."

"Well, but I mean one," Doxie continued, unmoved; "and I saw her crying, and I asked God to stop her being frightened and cold, and not to let her cry; and he did directly."

"What person was that, Doxie?"

"I'll show you her," said little Doxie, brightening into dimples, and flushing. "She's so—so pretty!"

"You must show her to me, Doxie," Madelon said, smiling at the child's energy. "I didn't know we numbered any one so lovely among our acquaintance. When may I see her?"

"To-night," Doxie said, mysteriously, "when I am in bed, and nurse has gone down to her supper. Don't guess, Madelon;" and Doxie held her little hand over Madelon's mouth.

"Indeed, I won't guess," Madelon promised; "no need to strangle me, Doxie dear."

The day passed heavily enough for Madelon, and her heart was very weary and sad, as she ascended the nursery stairs to fulfil her promise to Doxie. As she entered the nursery she was astonished at its brilliancy. The moonlight poured in a clear stream upon the floor. The children, sleeping on white pillows, showed like little angels in the flood of bright light. And Doxie, pattering to her side, looked the least earthly, perhaps, of them all.

"You have come," she said, in an enchanted whisper.

"Yes, I have come. How bright you have it here, Doxie. Where is your beautiful friend?"

Madelon, as she spoke, sat down on a low chair in the window, and gathered her little sister up into her lap.

"There she is," Doxie said, with an outstretched finger, and a whole world of satisfaction and emphasis in her voice. "Isn't she pretty and white to-night?"

"Very—very lovely."

"She always is lovely," said Doxie; "she is lovely even when she cries."

"So she cried last night?"

"She did cry," said little Doxie; "and it wasn't a nice night like this. There were such dark clouds, and it was so cold."

Madelon drew her little sister still nearer.

"And you prayed for her, Doxie?" the girl asked softly.

"Yes, I prayed," little Doxie answered her simply; "and she is not crying to-night."

"No, indeed, she is not. She looks so calm. I want you to pray for me to-night, Doxie dear."

"I always do, of course," said Doxie; "and brothers and sisters, and take care of me this night evermore. Amen."

"Yes, but I want you to say more than that to-night, dear."

"What am I to say?" the child asked, looking up with innocent, glad eyes in her sister's face.

Madelon spoke hesitatingly, as if the framing her sad thoughts for the little one's hearing was difficult to her.

"There is a great trouble come, Doxie, and papa is very, very unhappy; and I am unhappy—"

Madelon caught her breath suddenly, only just in time to prevent a sob.

"And mamma is unhappy," said Doxie, supposing that to be the end of the sentence.

"No—no, Doxie, mamma is not unhappy; God has made dear mamma happy."

"Oh," said little Doxie, and kneeled down at her sister's feet. "O God!" she said, in her sweet childish voice, "I am so very, very glad you have made dear mamma happy. O you good God, make poor Madelon happy quite through the bad trouble."

"It's all right now," said little Doxie, when, as she rose from her knees, she found that her sister was crying; "you won't feel unhappy long, now. God is going to take care of you."

Madelon walked across the nursery floor, which was shining and sparkling in the white light, holding little Doxie in her arms.

She deposited the child in her snowy little bed, and kissed the pretty, tired eyes that, despite little Doxie, were beginning to close of themselves.

Madelon was leaving the room, when Doxie's sleepy little voice, soft like some distant echo, arrested her.

"How good of Him to make dear mamma happy!" And Madelon dried her tears.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

215. Name the occasion on which man first exercised the power of speech.

216. Who was the Apollo of the Greeks, and the inventor of wind and stringed instruments?

217. How many patriarchs form the bridge that connects the creation with the deluge, and across what period of years does it stretch?

218. For the first 987 years of the world three cases of departure from this life occurred in different ways. Name them.

219. Who was the first patriarch who, by a natural death, departed this life before his father; and mention a subsequent instance notified as such in the Bible.

220. How many women are mentioned by name in the Bible from the creation till twenty centuries after?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 448.

199. 2 Chron xxiv. 21, 22; Luke xi. 51.

200. That in the upper room, awaiting with the apostles the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (Acts i. 14).

201. He that ruleth his spirit (Prov. xvi. 32).

202. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin" (John viii. 34).

203. In connection with the mother of Sisera (Judg. v. 30).

204. The high priest (Lev. xxi. 14).

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